

**PARSON CAPEN HOUSE****Howlett Street, Topsfield**

This remarkable survivor, one of the best-preserved large 17th-century New England frame houses, has the date June 18, 1683, carved on a second-story beam, or girt. The mortised and tenoned oak frame, with its typical second-story overhang, rests on a foundation of unmortared fieldstones. "Parson" Capen — the Reverend Joseph Capen — was called to the pastorate at Topsfield in 1681, at the age of 23. His house was restored in 1913 and is operated as a historic house museum.